

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

Report Release Date: May 10, 2012

**Review of the Death of Steven Melton
of Pittsburg County, Oklahoma**

General Information

On March 16, 2012, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the death of three-month-old Steven Melton. A Criminal Felony Murder in the First Degree charge was filed in Pittsburg County District Court on May 21, 2010, against Felicia Melton, Steven's biological mother.

The following is a summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS); the dates and outcome of investigations and actions taken by the OKDHS; the actions taken by the district attorney; the dates and summary of judicial proceedings; and the rulings of the court, as authorized by 10A O.S. Section 1-6-105 (below).

Authorization

Title 10A, Section 1-6-105, B, D, and E, of the Oklahoma Statutes, states:

B. When a person responsible for a child has been charged by information or indictment with committing a crime resulting in the death or near death of the child, there shall be a presumption that the best interest of the public is served by public disclosure of certain information concerning:

1. The circumstances of the investigation of the death or near death of the child; and
2. Any other investigations concerning that child, or other children while living in the same household.

D. 1. At any time subsequent to seven (7) days after the date the person responsible for the child has been criminally charged, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth shall, upon request, release certain information to the public within sixty (60) days of the request as follows:

- a. a confirmation shall be provided by the Commission as to whether a report of suspected child abuse or neglect has been made concerning the alleged victim or other children while living in the same household and whether an investigation has begun,
- b. confirmation shall be provided by the Commission as to whether previous reports of suspected child abuse or neglect have been made and the dates thereof, a

summary of those previous reports, the dates and outcome of any investigations or actions taken by the Department [OKDHS] and the Commission in response to any previous report of child abuse or neglect, and the specific recommendation made to the district attorney and any subsequent action taken by the district attorney,

c. the dates of any judicial proceedings prior to the death or near death of the child,

d. recommendations submitted by the Department [OKDHS] and the Commission shall be provided in writing including recommendations made at the hearing as they relate to custody or placement of a child, and

e. the rulings of the court.

2. Specific recommendations made by the Commission described in any progress reports of a pending case submitted to the court may be disclosed by the Commission.

E. Any disclosure of information pursuant to this section shall not identify or provide an identifying description of any complainant or reporter of child abuse or neglect, and shall not identify the name of the child victim's siblings or other children living in the same household, the parent or other person responsible for the child, or any other member of the household, other than the person criminally charged.

Identifiers:

Child's Name: Steven Melton
Date of Birth: January 28, 2010
Date of Death: May 19, 2010

Alleged Perpetrator: Felicia Melton, biological mother

Sibling 1: almost three-years-old at the time of Steven's death

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) did not become aware of this case until after the death of Steven Melton.

Case History

First Report to the OKDHS Alleging Abuse/Neglect (August 19, 2008)

The first report alleging abuse or neglect was received by the Pittsburg County OKDHS on August 19, 2008. The reporter alleged that Felicia Melton suffered from a medical condition and as a result had dropped Sibling 1 on more than one occasion. It was alleged that Sibling 1 had suffered a bruise on the top of the head as a result of being dropped.

It was also alleged that Sibling 1 had fallen out of their crib due to Felicia Melton leaving the crib wall down.

The referral was assigned as a Priority II Assessment with three days to make contact with the child. The OKDHS made an unannounced home visit on August 21, 2008. Felicia Melton denied that she had ever dropped Sibling 1 or that Sibling 1 had ever fallen out of their crib. The home was found to be clean and hazard free according to OKDHS. Several collaterals were interviewed all of which reported that they had no concerns for Sibling 1. The OKDHS determined that Threat of Harm did not apply to Sibling 1.

Second Report to the OKDHS Alleging Abuse/Neglect (May 19, 2010)

The second report alleging abuse or neglect was received by the Pittsburg County OKDHS on May 19, 2010. The reporter alleged that three-month-old Steven Melton had been transported to a local hospital and was later transferred to a metropolitan hospital in Tulsa. It was alleged that Steven had suffered bruising to his gums and the left side of his head. Steven later died as a result of blunt force trauma to his head.

The OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority I Investigation. The OKDHS made a finding of Substantiated as to the allegations of Abuse/Death of Steven in regard to Felicia Melton. The allegation of Threat of Harm was Substantiated with Court Intervention requested in regard to Sibling 1 and Felicia Melton.